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An Experiential Learning Seminar for the Master of Arts in Teaching Program

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for

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Introduction

The Experiential Learning Seminar proposal is an outgrowth of the Cross-Cultural Studies module of this year's Master of Arts in Teaching program. Cross-Cultural studies was offered to the foreign language majors on campus and was to be offered to people studying for the teaching of English as a Second Language as part of their in-country student teaching experience. From FL and ESL majors alike there arose a great hue and cry regarding the cross-cultural segment. Some people wanted more training, while others wanted very little. It became clear that the cross-cultural module should be modified in some way.

Surveys were given to this year's Master of Arts in Teaching candidates (hereafter M.A.T.s) asking for their comments on what could be done to improve the module as far as they were concerned. Not one of the surveys suggested eliminating cross-cultural studies altogether; so it was assumed that there was a need for something of the sort.

The current proposal attempts to broaden the base of the course, in order to better meet the needs of the students, the M.A.T. program and the profession (as duly interpreted by the author). It seems that the greatest need of these groups is improved communication between its members and those it serves. Each of us, at some time, can admit to problems in communication with ourselves and others. With communication comes understanding, which can bridge barriers to understanding. We as language teachers make it possible for more and more people to communicate in the same language. We can go one step further to the greater goal of enhancing peace and happiness in this world by developing understanding between ourselves, our students and others. Therefore, the basic goals of the Experiential Learning

Seminar are: (1) to present certain life experiences so that M.A.T. candidates will become interested in a study of the relationships between peoples of not only identical or similar, but also different cultures;(2) to have M.A.T.s see the need for bridging communication barriers that stand in the way of their understanding; (3) to have them attempt to develop means of bridging these barriers and (4) to discover means of developing the same powers in their students.

This paper offers concrete suggestions which might enable the M.A.T. candidates to go about finding ways of solving the problems of dealing with cultural elements in or out of the classroom. Some of the suggestions will be deemed better, or more pertinent than others. They are offered as an attempt to enlarge upon an already functioning program. Some ideas come from other sources and are duly noted; other ideas come from the author and represent a potpourri of ideas in the area of cross-cultural studies. The suggestions have been organized to comprise one sort of possible program for cross-cultural studies. The ideas might be used in the way they are presented or be reorganized, or be used according to any number of criteria, depending upon the needs and situations of the people involved. Within this basic organization the suggestions have been divided into areas by the author for means of organization. Many of them by their nature have several areas within them and the author feels that if properly used, they will be very powerful tools on which to gain, through experience, learning that is relevant and applicable, in and out of the classroom.

Philosophical Basis and Rationale for use of the Experiential Learning Seminar

The Experiential Learning Seminar is based on the Experiential Laboratory concept developed by the Peace Corps for training its

volunteers. The following are excerpts from a hand-out by the Peace Corps explaining the Experiential Laboratory:

> "When we talk about learning how to learn in the experiential laboratory, we are not talking about the kind of learning that predominates in school situations (memorizing facts or formulas or the opinions of authorities for regurgitation), nor are we talking about the kind of learning that builds on and reinforces our particular prejudices or views of the world. Instead, we are talking about (1) an experimental approach to learning in which the concepts we learn, or constructs we develop, are treated as hypotheses(not facts), are subjected to constant testing, and are modified as we learn more about their relation to the real world; (2) trainee-centered rather than trainer-centered learning with the trainee assuming the major responsibility for his own learning, but making maximum use of the resources available; (3) learning from examination and assessment of experience; (4) an 'openness to experience', a willingness to enlarge upon one's own experience or to learn from the experiences of others; (5) 'resistance to premature closure, the ability to withold judgment until all data have been carefully analyzed'; (6) an attitude of 'constructive discontent,' the tendency to question but to accept and to use until something better is found (as opposed to the tendency to reject and destroy); and (7) learning through the identification and solution of problems, a creative approach to problem solving with emphasis on the exploration and examination of alternatives.
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> Learning how to learn is not easy to achieve, however, If one of our objectives is to learn how to learn from our experience in training and beyond training, we must become more aware of and sensitive to our own reactions and the reactions of others. Many of these reactions will not be verbal, which means that we need to learn to read nonverbal cues more accurately. This is difficult enough in our own culture, but becomes particularly important when the cues we must rely on are part of another culture.
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> Contrary to popular opinion, experience is not a very good teacher, unless we know how to learn from experience. Few of us do. To help the participants learn how to learn from their own experience, laboratory training is based in part on the Dilemma-Invention-Feedback-Examination Learning Model. We try to develop dilemmas or place you in situations where you develop dilemmas yourselves and to structure the training so that you can examine your feelings, reactions, and typical ways of resolving dilemmas or solving problems. We try to help you create 'a responsive environment', a climate in which you can experiment with alternatives and in which you can learn to give and receive feedback. And last, we try to help you learn to generalize beyond the laboratory experience so that what you learn here will have application in all aspects of your work and life.

The Dilemma-Invention-Feedback-Examination Learning Model

1. Dilemma. A dilemma is any situation where we are not sure what to do. It is a new situation; thus, old solutions and previous ways of behaving may not be appropriate. When our perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs, expectations, and actions do not achieve the desired result or are in any way questioned or challenged, we face a dilemma. We try to find our way out of dilemmas in many ways:

   a. We may behave as though the new situation were like the old one and use an old solution that really is not appropriate.

   b. We may seek advice, look for an "expert" to tell us what to do.

   c. We may do nothing, hoping the problem will go away.

   d. We may become "defensive," and try to deny that a problem exists.

   e. We may become hostile and attack the person we perceive as creating the dilemma.

   f. We may withdraw, go into "flight," trying to run away from the problem.

   g. Or, we may begin to search or explore in an attempt to discover new approaches to solution of the dilemma, which leads us to:

2. Invention. Invention is encouraged when we become aware that conventional or traditional solutions and procedures are no longer adequate to deal with a situation. Invention occurs when a person is ready to think, to shed old notions, to experiment and explore to see whether new ones can be found that will work. The period when old behavior is being abandoned and new behavior has not yet been invented or accepted to replace it is referred to as an "unfrozen" period. It is a period when there is likely to be criticism, accusation, attack, withdrawal, flight, and defensiveness. This is why the free and supportive atmosphere of the laboratory (an atmosphere that expects and tolerates these reactions) is so important and why it is important to create this atmosphere if one wants to initiate change outside the laboratory.

3. Feedback. Feedback is the key to the "responsive environment." It is the way in which people let another person know their feelings, observations, perceptions, and reactions, in respect to his attitudes and behavior. We can seek feedback, verbal and nonverbal, to examine the consequences of our behavior and to learn to be

aware of and to perceive more accurately the nonverbal cues we need to continually assess the effectiveness of our behavior. We will have to rely primarily on nonverbal feedback when we enter another culture, but in training we need to learn to make effective use of verbal feedback.

4. Examination. The last step in the process is that of examining the total experience--the situation, the dilemma, and the results of experimentation and feed-back--to see whether anything has been learned that could be applied in other situations. Using the experiential model as a guide, we reflect on the total experience--the dilemma, the action we took, and the feedback we received. Was our action or response to the situation, an old response of fight, flight, or withdrawal, or did we attempt to invent a response more appropriate to the situation and our desired outcomes? How effective was the action? What feedback did we receive regarding its effectiveness?

Not only should you learn more about yourself, about your beliefs, values, assumptions, attitudes, behaviors, goals, and expectations, but you should learn something about the consequences of all these in terms of your relations with others. You should become aware of and sensitive to sources of feedback that will give you the information you need as a guide for future behavior. You should become more aware of your own reactions to others and consequences in terms of your own attitudes, behavior, and working relations with others. You should develop more understanding and tolerance of views that might be different from your own, and you should have a better understanding of the ways in which those with whom you are working strive to maintain their particular world view of find their way out of the dilemmas they face.

Learning to approach our dilemmas, particularly dilemmas in our interactions with others, in this way is some of the most valuable learning we can acquire. But unless the new learning can be applied in situations outside the laboratory, it will not be very effective or long lasting. Attention must be given to helping one another generalize, to recognize and plan for applications in other situations, particularly ....in another culture.

Hopefully, this process will continue beyond the laboratory. If ... (a person) ... is able to do all this, he will have learned how to learn."

The Experiential Laboratory has much to offer M.A.T. candidates in terms of helping them meet the new problems/ challenges presented by our ever increasingly complex society

to them as teachers. Let us consider some of these problems.

Our cities are becoming increasingly multi-lingual, multi-cultural areas, and rapidly so. This brings increasing social problems to our society. Teachers must have the means to develop common grounds on which students from different backgrounds can relate to each other. Even if a teacher does not have a variety of backgrounds in his class, it is becoming important to provide his students with a preparation for dealing with students outside of the classroom who come from different cultural, socio-economic, and racial backgrounds.

A teacher of foreign languages has many more problems. Foreign language enrollment is at a new low in spite of the need for more bi-lingualism in this country. There is a great WHY? to learning foreign languages. Teachers must know themselves, and examine why they are teaching foreign languages. Students who will not likely travel to other countries and who express a dislike for those who do not speak their language will not respond to the teacher's justification that foreign language should be studied for travel purposes, or for the purpose of being able to understand those who speak the language (understanding in a linguistic and a cultural sense). To make a student feel that his or her time is being spent in a worthwhile manner, in the foreign language class, he or she must be learning something about his or her self and his or her relationship to others and the world; he or she must be receiving a "true education in the sense of expansion of consciousness and the harmonious development of latent powers."[a] Students have got to know that what they are doing with the teacher in the classroom really concerns them and will help them on the street.

Once the students are in the classroom, the teacher faces the problems of dealing with the different cultural, socio-economic and racial backgrounds of his or her students. In addition the teacher will have the added responsibility of helping the students to come to some understanding of the culture of the people whose language they are learning. This is not only important because it makes the study of the language so much more real. Travel abroad by some of our young people is increasing, and we have an investment in whether they appear to the hosts as children of the "ugly Americans" or as people who show their sensitivity and ability to comply with the customs and life-styles of the culture being visited.

Cross-cultural understanding is not only important for the teacher in the classroom. It is also important for that very teacher in order to have a successful experience in his or her and in the eyes of the host country he or she visits. The teacher needs not only to have an idea of the customs working in the country to be visited, but more importantly, he or she must have certain general understandings about the culture that will be of value no matter what situation may occur. Then, back in the classroom the teacher must have the abibity to transmit what she or he has learned and to develop the ability in his or her students to generalize about a culture.

In this age of rapid change it is no longer enough that schools be purely disseminators of knowledge. Instead, it is more than necessary for people to be trained to constantly seek new knowledge in the interest of the continual evaluation of truths and goals. Teachers must know themselves and their purposes well.

They must be prepared to meet all of their students and all of their needs.

The Experiential Learning Seminar offers people the opportunity to study themselves and to continually evaluate what is happening to them whether it be in the classroom, another culture or any other situation. The study offered by the Experiential Learning Seminar makes it possible to explore beyond collecting information about specific cultures (which is helpful, admittedly) to such fields as human relations workshops, group encounter/group dynamics, strength training and sensitivity training. This is even more important than specific information about a country, since within even the same culture every situation will be somewhat different from every other one.

The question may be asked: Is all this essential to teaching? Perhaps not if a teacher sees himself only as a didactic vehicle for the dissemination of knowledge. However, the teacher who is unconcerned with the human or emotional aspects of teaching cannot hope to be very successful, or happy when faced with today's kinds of problems. If we accept the fact that teaching has a human element, then we have an obligation to study some of the things currently being done in this area. Another question may be asked: Does all this belong in a workshop on learning how to learn? Largely, that decision will be left to next year's class. However, situations such as strength training (improving one's classroom control) can be scrutinized by the principles of learning how to learn as readily as another situation, and are very important in the field of teaching.

The more traditional concept of cross-cultural studies is still a part of the Experiential Learning Seminar. The most

frequently stated reason among this year's M.A.T. candidates for coming to the School for International Training above other schools offering graduate degrees in teaching is the emphasis on the overseas experience. There is a need to be able to live, work and function effectively in cultures other than our own. Included here are inner-city situations, Indian reservations, New Suburbia, as well as cultures existing outside our own national boundaries. Within the Experiential Learning Seminar framework each person's needs can be considered from where he or she is along with the means of meeting those needs.

Overall Focus of the Experiential Learning Seminar

The overall focus of the Seminar will be teaching by better, more prepared teachers. In order to insure that the program is is relevant to students's needs, it is suggested that the Seminar be operated by the Dilemma-Invention-Feedback-Examination Learning Model with a participative approach as outlined in the Canadian Training Methods magazine by Des Conner and Stan Searle and appearing in this paper in the appendix following. For example, in deciding what activities to pursue next year, the group must be considered: the group must ask if the activity relates to the classroom situation or throws into relief some aspect of teaching. If, for example, they can see that having monthly activities with Brattleboro's senior citizens relates in a positive way to teaching, then the activity should be pursued. If they can see no connection between the activity and teaching, it should not become part of their content material.

In this way the Experiential Seminar will have as its design the focus of attention on the student instead of the ad-

Ministrator (but not to the exclusion of the administrator), on "learning rather than training"[1] or being told, on "creative thinking and problem-solving rather than memorization,"[1] on "responsibility for initiative and exploration rather than conformity"[1] and therefore on interest and excitement (as a result of the students having a say in what they work on) instead of boredom.

In addition to broadening the base of this year's cross-cultural module, an attempt is made to individualize the program to a very great extent. This based on the fact that the M.A.T. candidates this year offered an extremely varied and rich pool of experience, training and knowledge from which to draw. At the same time it becomes obvious that to meet each individual's needs, the course must be determined to a great degree by each individual for him or herself. Therefore, given a loose skeletal framework, it is suggested that the students of next year be asked to structure the course according to their needs and expectations, and plan or select the actual content activities.

Thus, the ideas that are proposed here below must be considered as only suggestions of possible ways of entering into the Experiential Learning Seminar. Even the goals of the Experiential Learning Seminar may be stated in a number of ways, depending on how the students might choose to use words. In the Appendix, the author has place a number of different wordings for demonstration's sake, which students might be interested in reading.

Structure of the Experiential Learning Seminar

"Experiential learning is necessarily emotional as well as intellectual and involves behavior analysis and skill practice.

It involves the (student) actively (working alone and with others) in:

- o experiencing situations similar or analogous to those he (or she) might encounter as a (student);
- o identifying and analyzing carefully chosen problems, particularly those of critical interest, conflict or difference betweeen the two cultures;
- o exploring alternative solutions to these problems and the probable consequences;
- o examining his own feelings and reactions in the various problems and situations presented;
- o examining his own values, beliefs, attitudes, assumptions, and expectations and the problems these might create in another culture;
- o attempting to integrate and conceptualize the learning that results from these experiences and analyses;
- o generalizing from the training experience to the anticipated living and working situation in the host country;
- o identifying the kinds of information he needs to solve new problems, or skills he needs to be effective;
- o developing or taking advantage of opportunities for skill practice."[2]

In other words, the Experiential Learning Seminar can be seen as having two related areas of experience. One is in the area of virtual experience, or the intellectual and the other is in the area of actual experience or the emotional. The merit in the Experiential Learning Seminar is that both areas of experience are used to effect the greatest learning on the part of the student. It can be stated in the following manner: it is neither sufficient to intellectualize without a base of experience nor is it sufficient that we merely experience without intellectualizing. For the best use of our time spent in learning, we must experience, consider, draw conclusions and experience again, as if we were scientists carrying on experiments.

The Experiential Learning Seminar should be introduced to the M.A.T. candidates as a major challenge. This challenge should be called learning to learn and should entail a basic study of one's self, in which the question of whether one is willing to/can adapt to new situations is entertained. This challenge should be emphasized as taking place before any study of one's relationship to his/her own culture or other cultures can be studied. The individual must consciously decide whether he or she is willing to open him or herself and actively participate in situations which will provide insights and growth. What is at stake here is more than having an M.A.T. candidate who speaks the language he or she will teach and who is well liked by students and administrators. Beyond the training in linguistics and teaching approaches there is the area of human relations which has too often been neglected in the past. The importance of knowing oneself, of inner knowing, of seeking one's deep center cannot be over-emphasized according to this author. Knowing oneself is the first step to knowing others and knowing ourselves as much as possible through the eyes of others. Without this knowing, it is impossible to truly know what interpersonal relationships entail even at the most elementary level, much less at the level where cross-cultural relationships occur. The exploration of self can be painful as well as exhilarating and expanding. Students should be encouraged to consider their willingness to accept this challenge seriously. Certainly, if there is something they disagree with or do not understand they should be encouraged to talk about this at length with a person who is willing to listen and a good

dictionary so as to clear up any mis-understood or undefined words. After this, a student may still feel that he or she cannot go along with the premise of knowing oneself first. It should be the program's right always to invite this student to withdraw from the program if it is in the best interest of all involved.

Inner Structure of the Experiential Learning Seminar

So that the Experiential Learning Seminar can have as its design the focus of attention on the student instead of the administrator (but not to the exclusion of the administrator) suggestions are made generally because the author feels the actual design should be developed by the people who will be involved. The author sees behavioral goals set by someone other than the person who is to meet them, as limiting of the progress one can make, especially in such things as awareness and sensitivity and encourages people to be other-determined, dependent, and lacking in creativity and originality. It is suggested that the students set their own individual goals and minimum standards, with the idea that they (the students) will be far more demanding of excellence than if these are set by someone else for them. Another suggestion is that the students make their individual goals with the guidance of an advisor, chosen by the student at the beginning of the year. Throughout the year, the student could be expected to have regular meetings with his or her advisor for the purpose of checking on the student's progress. In this way, the onus of responsibility would be with the student but at the same time the M.A.T. program would have means of monitoring the activity. In this manner of working it could be emphasized from the beginning and frequently throughout the year that the M.A.T. program

would reserve the right to fail a student if it felt that he or she had not accepted the responsibility of carrying out the proposed program. This would protect a rather liberal approach from being abused. This could be stressed as the ultimate right, in spite of the subjective aspect of the judgment. The M.A.T. program however, could be required to notify a student immediately when it or other students felt a student was not functioning to his or her capacity and give him or her a chance to respond to this charge.

The orientation of Advisors would be a very crucial element in the success of a student oriented program. The advisors would have to be able to help make the goals realizable. Clear guidelines stressing what the viable goals entailed as well as questions to aid the advisor in helping the student would have to be sent to or agreed upon by the advisors very early, with an advisor's meeting periodically, as a follow-up. Such questions as the following would have to be considered: is the timing of the goal realistic, is it appropriate to the situation and person, is it manageable and not too broad or trivial; and has the person outlined procedures as to how to reach his or her goal. The advisors would have to know that they were a part of a contract, and therefore would have to be active participants, directly involved with the students.

In this way, the design would be flexible and yet it would have safeguards built into it to protect students from harming themselves and/or the Program. It is also suggested that the entire M.A.T. group set goals for itself and decide upon the activities it wanted to pursue in line with the cross-cultural segment of the program. Then the entire group could be sub-divided into randomly selected small groups who would be

together all year for the purpose of meeting together, sharing their ideas, viewpoints, to have a group project, all of which would encourage further learning and development of means to share and transmit learning that occurred. Each small group could be responsible for an aspect of the overall program such as achieving a particular goal; they could be responsible for setting up activities in specific areas in which the whole group could participate.

The reason that small groups are suggested is that this would allow for a deeper study of particular aspects of the Experiential Learning Seminar, and would individualize the situation (since the M.A.T. group is usually made up of 40 or more people). The author's group was 28 students, but the absence of small groups (for the majority of the time) meant that students were much more isolated from one another and that topics were not as often thoroughly explored because of the large group study approach. More sharing and more exposure to fellow students might be made possible by the small group format. Random selection is suggested so as to prevent the self-selection of groups into cliques that have already been set up as a result of social compatibility. It is felt that working with people of various personalities and backgrounds makes the experience much richer, and perhaps may engourage the use of some of the approaches outlined in the Experiential Laboratory (especially if a difficult working relationship is encountered, which is much more realistic since we rarely get to choose those with whom we must work or teach).

This completes the theory outline and justification for the Experiential Learning Seminar proposal. It is felt by the author that the merit of this proposal lies in the fact that the traditional cross-cultural studies segment has been kept: it has been encompassed by suggestions of different techniques of handling the human element. It is hoped that M.A.T. candidates will be enabled to better meet themselves and others as teachers and culture-crossers. It is further hoped that M.A.T. candidates will be guided in learning how to learn in this rapidly changing world of ours, so that their ideals and ways of dealing with the environment will not become absolute after leaving the School for International Training but will constantly receive rejuvenation through reassessment.

Following are activities, suggestions and study questions which have been compiled by the author. Again the flexibility of the organization of this list must be stressed. It is only one person's point of view; it should be reviewed and reorganized if deemed necessary.

Finance of Experiential Learning Seminar

The author worked on the assumption that there was not extra money for personnel. In the 1971-1972 budget, $400 was listed for cultural activities. The author proposes that this money be turned over to an administrative committee of students and that the small groups be responsible in turn for selecting and organizing cultural events for the entire group in conjunction with the Administrative Committee. It is suggested that this Administrative Committee be elected by the M.A.T. students to act as the whole group leader in the best interests of the whole group--the number of members of the Committee depending on the desires of the group.

Appendix

The author has added an appendix of the data collected from various sources. Included is a copy of the Canadian Training Device and a copy of the Peace Corps Experiential Laboratory Training Device, along with other materials which may be of some interest to those who may see fit to implement this proposal.

Suggested Specific Structure of Orientation to year incorporating Experiential Learning Seminar/Cross-Cultural Studies

1st day- Meeting with M.A.T. Director and staff

familiarization with program
introduction of M.A.T. candidates to one another

meeting with other S.I.T. personnel

have a meeting where every director or head of an office that might be helpful to M.A.T.s (as advisors on projects, sources of information, jobs) would be invited to talk about what his/her office does, and M.A.T.s could introduce themselves and indicate their interests.

2nd day- Albatross — M.A.T.s can mutually examine their reactions to an unfamiliar cultural situation

3rd day- Brattleboro — explore Brattleboro in various subject areas, in groups of three or so. Then meet at S.I.T. with group and Brattleboro representatives afterwards and discuss findings. Other students could be present or be given a written or oral report later followed by a discussion.

4th day- Experiential Learning Workshop

Introduction to the concept. Orientation, rationale, techniques of use. Charles MacCormick indicated interest in chairing such a seminar.

5th day- Prepare for Drop-Off*

Drop-off in local Brattleboro area. Prior to drop-off, meeting on what to expect, what to look for, how to record data, details on pick-up afterwards.

* a drop-off is an experience of being put on one's own for a period of three days in an area not previously lived in or well-known. The person is given a very small amount of money and is left, or dropped off at a pre-arranged location and is told that he or she will be picked up at the same place at a particular time, to see how he or she has fared. This makes it essential for him or her to seek other people's help, in terms of food, lodging, work, etc.

6th day- Begin Drop-Off

7th day- Drop-Off

8th day- End Drop-Off

9th day- Evaluation of Drop-Off

Immediately after return, have de-briefing on what happened, what was learned, generalizations, and write-up of experience. Immediacy is important--otherwise the students integrate the experiences into their personalities. If students do rest before group meeting, they should be instructed not to discuss their experience at all, with anyone.

10th day- M.A.T. Group Workshop for Structuring Year Program for Cross-Cultural Studies

setting of group goals and individual goals
election of administrative steering committee in charge of budget and group activities (buying films, administrative organization)

Break-down of group into randomly selected small groups to work together through year

11th day- Introduction of skeletal plan for Experiential Learning Seminar.

Students responsible for setting goals and evaluation with advisor of own choice, with responsibility for on-going evaluation with advisor and M.A.T. director.

Below are some activities and suggestions which have been compiled from S.I.T., M.A.T. personnel and other sources. The M.A.T. group might use this list in selecting the activities most effective in achieving its goals.

This section includes:

activities which teach experiential learning skills
activities which open communication
in-country study

If it is accepted that another way of stating the ultimate goal for the Experiential Learning Seminar is: M.A.T.s living and working together in harmony, with each other and those on campus, and with those encountered off campus, then the suggestions following can be divided into three main areas, not including an evaluative component (described later).

The three main areas are broken down as follows: (1) activities for the acquisition of Experiential Learning Skills for the purpose of creative problem solving, (2) activities based on mental/intellectual experience designed to open/increase communication and understanding; and (3) activities based on emotional/actual experience designed to open/increase communication and understanding. Insights gained from #2 and #3 will increase the acquisition of Experiential Learning Skills, and knowledge/skills gotten from #1 may be used to enhance the communication and understanding resulting from undertaking the activities and questions in #2 and #3. #1 in essence encompasses both #2 and #3 and is meant to make experiences encountered therein more meaningful.

Four activities: reading, experience, discussion, and application are envisioned as means of achieving the aforementioned harmony in dealing with self and others. Reading will be particular to #1 and #2 above, actual experience

(past or present) will be part of #1 and #3, virtual experience in present and past time will be part of #2, discussion will be part of #1, #2 and #3 and application will be a part of #1, #2 and #3. Successful application to subsequent situations of what has been previously read, experienced and discussed should yield people who feel comfortable themselves and others, whatever the cultural situation. Following is more specific information about the three main areas. They are subsequently broken down into sub-areas the author feels are related to the main areas. The section on in-country study (a valuable cross-cultural segment including some ideas for evaluating the success of the program) will follow the other three areas.

I. Activities for the acquisition of experiential learning skills for the purpose of Creative Problem Solving

Experiential learning encourages the acquisition of abilities to tackle and solve problems creatively in such a way that problems are seen as challenges, where work can be done. In creative problem solving, the individual is involved actively, as a whole person, emotionally and intellectually. These two areas are separated in this paper for clarity, but actually they are part of a whole. In creative problem solving, a situation will evolve, as below, where students are not told, but rather asked to develop their own schema for analyzing and comparing whatever is to be studied. In this case, the concern is to direct students' creative energies to the classroom and its cultural component. The responsibility ultimately lies with the students. Others can only suggest and guide.

Questions students might ask themselves, or be asked to consider:

What are Experiential Learning Skills and what are they used for?

What is communication?

What is good communication/bad communication/no communication?

What is necessary for good communication to happen?

What has gone wrong when there is bad or no communication? Should we try to communicate more?

What must we do to have good communication with anyone?

How can we bridge barriers in communication posed by ourselves and others?

How can we begin to really know ourselves/others?

How can we read the cues others send out and be more aware of what we send out?

How can we learn how to confront one another in sticky/unfamiliar/hostile situations and still maintain open communication? Is this necessary? Is it possible?

How can the group develop more sensitivity to one another/come to a better understanding on a more open level?

How do we get better control of ourselves and our environment?

Are there things we can do which will make us more adept and clear in handling and analyzing our mutual life experiences?

How can we tell that we have improved in these areas?

How can we apply what we have learned to particular activities, for example: in-field study, speaking before an audience on a controversial subject, convincing our principal or fellow faculty members to accept our proposal to modify an existing program or to introduce a new idea or educational approach, evaluating students' progress, when we are asked to give the deciding vote on a proposal that concerns us, or does not concern us, when we note a lack of vitality in our school, students or department.

Suggested readings: see bibliography for particulars

<u>The Politics of Experience</u>: how to understand, use and build on it

Proxemic Behavior: the distance between us and whether it makes a difference

<u>Body Language</u>: how we use and interpret it

<u>The Silent Language</u>: how we communicate in silence when we do not want to sometimes.

Jonathan Livingston Seagull: the beauty within all of us and the achievement of it

Psychosynthesis: the art of knowing oneself/steps

Dianetics 55: what exactly is communication, and how to master it

How to Choose Your People: clears up the mystery of why people act the way they do sometimes

Miracles for Breakfast: how to communicate and work with the younger set

entire Peace Corps Handout on Experiential Learning
Cross-Cultural Training- a draft book
} for further information

Ways of acquiring experiential learning skills through group activities

Periodic meetings throughout the year could be held with various staff members and source personnel to share experience and attempt to arrive at solutions to the aforementioned questions. Source personnel: Janet Bing, Charles McCormack, Raymond Clark, Donald Batchelder, Ted Gochenour, Howard Shapiro, Jack Wallace and David Hopkins. The suggested use of source personnel does not exclude bringing in people from the field. Monetary considerations caused the author to list only campus personnel.

Meetings could be held with one source person, or a panel discussion could be held, with any number of source personnel on the panel. These meetings could take place with the whole M.A.T. group or a group of a few interested M.A.T.s. A group of students interested in a particular problem could ask a source person to meet with them. Meetings could entail discussions or reports on books read by members of the group. The group might split in two smaller groups. One half could read the book and report back to the other half with free discussion afterwards. If there were time during the same meeting, or at the next meeting, the other half could then report on another book and have a discussion

period afterwards. Another idea would be to have one group do some reading on a particular book and do a role play to get the ideas of the book across to the other group. Or one group could think of an activity which could precipitate a discussion in a certain topic area. Then they could bring in relevant information from the book they had read on that subject.

Some suggested activities for the group meetings are: the people in the group divide in pairs. They sit facing each other, a comfortable distance apart, and close their eyes. During a period of 15-40 minutes for the first time, the people try not to talk, twitch, swallow, change position, fall asleep, or think about anything. All they are to do is to be comfortable with the person facing them. Afterwards the group could talk about their mutual experience. The purpose of the exercise is to make people more aware of what they do when in the presence of another person and to help them feel comfortable in non-verbal situati ons with people, without having to do or say anything.

After the students have met this challenge, they can then attempt to confront another with their eyes open, sitting a confortable distance apart. This distance should not be more than three feet. The object would be to look at one another with no talking, blinking, twitching, swallowing, changing position, falling asleep or thinking about anything except being comfortable with the person being confronted. The time limit could be flexible (longer than 40 minutes, depending on the people). After this exercise the group could share their experiences for the purpose of knowing themselves and what they do with themselves in the presence of others. With this, students can begin to control the non-verbal cues they send out and be more aware of the cues being sent out by those they encounter.

Another activity for the group might be using two-way communication: it is a special term developed by a man named L. Ron Hubbard to mean a situation where two people communicate together in a certain way. A person says something to B person who acknowledges the receipt of what A person said. B person then says something to A person who acknowledges its receipt. A way of understanding this is: have you ever been in a conversation with someone, said something to them, and they did not respond to you, at all? How did you feel towards that person? What did you do? It is not likely that you were satisfied about getting no answer, and persisted until you got some kind of answer--or you got disgusted and left.

The group could divide into pairs. Then they could sit a comfortable distance away and attempt to carry on a conversation for no less than 20 minutes. Optimally this should be done with an observer who observes, but at no time says anything to the two people facing one another during the 20 minutes time. The object is to feel comfortable with the person, and to engage in a two-way communication wherein both people initiate and both people acknowledge communication. After the exercise, the people can discuss their feeling and reactions with one another and the group. Later new pairs might be formed for a repeat exercise. This might be especially interesting between people who do not get along very well. The above exercise helps in the study of communication and creates a directly observable situation. It is very valuable to study moments of discomfort or happiness to try to arrive at why these feelings were felt. Hopefully, this will make it possible for people to make their communication more pleasant for themselves and others,

and for them to do this with a greater sense of control.

These exercises can be done very early in the program when the M.A.T.sare just learning what experiential learning skills are and how they can be applied. Later after M.A.T.s have gained some experience they might undertake the same exercises and reflect on the difference in their approach in the present and their approach in the past. In this way, M.A.T.s could be more aware of what experiential learning skills mean and how they as individuals use them.

II. Activities for mental-intellectual experience

This section is intended to give students various opportunities to observe themselves using their abilities to examine, explore and evaluate data; discuss, recall previously observed phenomena and relate it to others. That is to apply experiential learning skills to the field of experience whereby previously considered questions or information are reconsidered or considered for the first time by sharing opinions with others; disagreements are experienced, but with the design of attempting to come to an agreement with other group members.

In addition, the activities for mental-intellectual experience are intended to offer the acquisition of further information about cross-cultural communication and the establishment of more effective cross-cultural communication in the field.

<u>Questions which might spark discussion or thoughts</u>:

What areas of communication are we not sure of, are just now thinking of or about which we find ourselves in disagreement with others?

What we must we do to bring us the understanding we need? Is there a particular way we can go about this research that will use everyone optimally or is this an individual affair?

How have we previously interpreted people's behavior who we have understood/not understood--liked/disliked? Think of some rude, embarrassing, or odd behavior. What did you do in the situation?

Are we using what we already know to improve communication and understanding between ourselves and others? How? Are we happier now with our abilities to communicate? If not, why? If so, why? Has the experiential learning seminar been helpful? If not, why? If so, why?

Has there been any value in meeting together to consider and discuss questions? What have we achieved by doing so?

What still remains that we would like to know? How do we go about finding the information we want? Where do we have to go? What do we have to do?

Books which might spark discussion or ideas:

The Master Game: asks the question what kind of game are you playing in life? Do you really want to play that game?

Games People Play: a description of some of the games we all engage in together-sometimes unwittingly

The Art of Loving: describes the kinds of relationships we have with one another: a 40 year old man can be a son to a 21 year old woman.

The Adolescent and His Will: describes the inner workings of us as human beings and the part the will and love play in them

The following questions can be engaged in by the whole group or a small group can choose certain questions, work on them and present them to the whole group, with discussion afterwards. The idea is to have everyone come to an agreement, or understanding of why a student feels the way he or she does about an area or question. This is for the purpose of using communication at all times to get to understanding. Discussion is encouraged on the basis of past experience, whereas research should be at a minimum, unless the group feels it is absolutely necessary. However, in the next section, opportunities for research and study are offered and the reason for this is so that students

are in a position where they have to rely on communication and its subsequent understanding rather than authorities who have the answers. The purpose here is the practice of communication in an uncommon circumstance. In the next section students will be able to find as many facts and figures as they wish. For now, it should be past experience as much as possible.

American values towards foreign students on S.I.T. campus
do they vary according to the culture?
are they easily identified?
are they based on current or past history or political relationship or lack of with the United States?
how does it affect the communication of Americans to foreign students/foreign students to Americans?

Latin-American (or other culture) values on S.I.T. campus towards American students
are they easily identified?
are they based on current or past history or political relationship or lack of with the United States?
how does it affect the communication between them and Americans/Americans and them?
where does the culture differ drastically/seem to be the same or similar.

General conceptions or misconceptions people from a specific culture have about Americans and vice versa. Predict and list questions that might be asked about the U.S. or the other country or countries. Can the original reason for these questions (conceptions, misconceptions) be found?

How can a person be made aware of his or her own culturally conditioned attitudes? Once done are there ways of effecting a change of behavior, if so desired?

Power structure of Brattleboro)Choose an area, public life for example).
Is the basic power structure reflected in the communication or non-communication between people?

choose an anti-establishment group
How do they attempt to get away from the establishment power structure? In doing so, do they evolve their own power structure?

Which areas would be most difficult for a visiting national to adjust to in the U.S. and vice versa. That is, an American finding himself or herself in the national's country (choose a specific country). Are there ways of making the adjustment easier for the people, a means of preparing them in some way based on research already done? How could this be done most effectively?

Is there some means of exploring culture shock? Are there varying levels and situations where it can occur? Is it necessary to leave one's country to experience culture shock? What seems to precipitate it? Are there means of insuring that it will not occur, or are there means of dealing with it when it does occur? How can one look into one's own experience, how can one open himself to be more sensitive to this phenomenon? Are there ways of transferring what one learns about it?

What are the general reactions of people when something happens, an incident occurs while they are in another culture that they do not expect, or that they cannot understand? How could they be helped to analyze the situation? For example, if they had been reacting from their own cultural base, how could they be helped to see this in a constructive manner?

Consider ethnic newspapers of various cultures. What ideas, or conclusions can be drawn from the papers to give and indication of what the culture feels to be most important to it. Are there any signs of extreme sensitivity to any particular culture, or a bias, positive or negative etc. towards any one cultural group. If a number of newspapers are considered, can any similarity or difference be seen in the way that each cultural element deals with cultures it feels to be threatening elements? This could also apply to sub-cultures within cultures--such as the Black Panther Party in the U.S.

What sort of cultural understanding can be derived by studying language in a linguistic-comparative manner? What sorts of concepts are familiar in one language and completely alien in another? What can be learned about the way a culture acts, from a study of its language? Could some idea of how they might react when learning English be obtained by a comparison of their language and English? For example, Chinese uses no tenses, whereas English does: French uses more nouns, whereas English uses more verbs. What sorts of things about the cultures can be derived, if any?

American values as they relate to the teacher and the field of education.
are these values changing? do they need to change? in particular areas in the U.S? do these values apply successfully outside the U.S? If not, why? What is being done in this country to attempt to change the values and philosophies? outside the country?

How can students be brought to an awareness of cultural aspects in the classroom, or in their neighborhood, or of the people whose language is being studied and therefore to increase their sensitivity or change their opinions, prejudices and hopefully their behavior towards their classmates, their neighbors, or the cultural group whose language is being studied.

M.A.T.s might consider or ask whether S.I.T. has a particular philosophy of education. They might further consider whether the M.A.T. program has a particular philosophy. It might be interesting for the group to consider whether it (the group) has verbally acknowledged that it has a particular philosophy, or whether it has been operating under one, but not verbally recognizing it. The group might consider whether it wishes to formalize a basic working philosophy.

This concludes section II. These questions or any others of interest are in this section so that M.A.T.s can practice the use of communication. The answers to these questions are not what is important and the students should be able to tell if this section was properly used if what seems to have been most important in reflection was the communication and the interchanges that took place, instead of the answers or individual opinions which students held.

III. Activities for emotional-actual experience

This section is intended to give students various opportunities to observe themselves while being actively involved in the acquisition of experience which will be helpful in establishing and increasing communication and understanding.

Questions which might start off an activity or be a starting point for planning an activity:

Where do we need to work in ourselves--in terms of improving our communication with others (regardless of cultural aspects)

With what or who has it been or is it hardest to communicate here? Has it been made any easier as a result of the Experiential learning seminar? If there has been no communication, enforced or difficult communication, is it possible to attempt to reach understanding through communication? If not, what would have to happen for understanding to occur? Can this be made to happen? Can you do anything yourself to assure that this does happen?

How do we respond to the same situations in comparison or contrast to our fellow students and why?

Can we learn from looking at different ways of responding? If so, what can be learned? How?

When do we find it difficult to open communication and keep it open? What can we do to make it easier?

What is the worst situation you have ever been in? Could you talk about it to the group? Do you feel safe, that is, is it o.k. to tell the group things about yourself, trusting that it will go no further? If not, can you paraphrase the situation? If not, answer the following questions for yourself. What did you do in that situation? Would you do the same thing now that you did then? Why or why not?

Suggested activities

It is advised that whenever possible, a follow-up session be held, to synthesize and summarize what happened--and handle any misunderstanding or disagreements which ensue before going on to the next activity.

Take certain incidents and look at them together (incidents which occured between group members that caused misunderstandings, or sensitive feelings, or downright anger). Why did these things happen? What would have prevented them from happening? Were they handled satisfactorily or was a bad feeling left? If so, how could it have been better handled? Has this affected the groups ability to work together? If so, could anything be done now to clear up any old bad feelings? If not, examine how the group relates with one another through an analysis of its selected groupings or cliques if any exist.

Engage in Don Batchelder's War Game, which was used with such groups as India Peace Corps, or the Intergroup Competition Exercise as found in the Draft Book put out by the Center for Research and Education, May, 1969.

A periodic meeting with the Director and Assistant Director in which an open question-answer session would be held. M.A.T.s could request other members of M.A.T. staff or S.I.T. to come to this kind of meeting. Meeting could be structured in such a way to encourage candid questions and answers by assuring M.A.T. that no part of the meeting would find a place in M.A.T. permanent files, nor would this appear on any letter of recommendation for any student.

A feedback session where M.A.T.s and Director and Assistant Director join together and tell one another what their first impressions and current feelings are towards one another in this way: each person in group has to give feedback on every other person but no opportunity to respond to the feedback is given. (For 12 people, each

person would give 11 feedbacks and then wait for the other people to give their 11 feedbacks in turn; the only time any one person would speak would be during his or her turn, not during anyone else's turn). After the feedback had all been given, the Director would ask the group to take hands and come together, with hands held high trying to touch the ceiling of the room and then forming a circle and approaching the middle with all hands trying to reach out and touch one another. These gestures or some other symbolic gesture could be used to signify the unity of the group; the acceptance of the existence of each individual in spite of disagreement with attitude or behavior.

How could the group develop a keen focus on its purpose, together, and discover how not to lose sight of its stated goals or goal? Perhaps a group discussion could be held where these questions could be entertained. (Such as what are your expectations and how do you hope to fulfill them?. or what are your expectations now in light of what you know as a result of being here during this time?, or what do you see is your role as a teacher, has it changed from when you first came here, and how do you now plan to use the time here to achieve that role?) or any other questions of a general, yet pertinent nature that the group could explore jointly, for its own sake. Periodic meetings might be held, sort of progress reports, where each M.A.T. candidate could give feedback on what he or she had been doing, how he or she felt about it, the program, the people etc., with positive and negative feelings, and what they were at the moment involved in--in such a way that everyone could speak his or her mind with noone being able to challenge or disagree, or to respond to what they had said. The meeting would be more of a sensitivity session, sort of getting everything out in the open, but without fear or reprisal from the M.A.T.s or program directors etc.

M.A.T. could organize a culture orientation program for incoming foreign students-with tutoring in ESL or any other services they might need, with a reciprocation on the International Students'of English part in that once a week they might give the M.A.T.s and the campus a cultural night. (Each night one culture would be represented in costume, custom and cuisine).

Definitions of abbreviations:

ICTs: students in the International Career Training Program

ISEs: International Students of English: foreign students who come to the School for International Training for English classes

ISPs: International Study Program: American students who travel to a foreign country of their choice to do a special study in a particular area

Explore one's own prejudices, pre-conceptions in relation with foreign students on campus. Examine whether behavior has changed toward any foreign representative, as a result of getting to know them? If so, what happened exactly? Can some generalizations be obtained from this examination?

University of Massachusetts Strength Training exercise--see some information enclosed--an excellent means of examining and improving one's own teaching under normal as well as stressful conditions.

MATs could make use of the languages brought by their colleagues and have mutual teaching of foreign languages with the 'student' MATs giving constructive criticism.

> Or, for more teaching experience, MATs could avail themselves to other people on campus, ISEs, ISPs, staff or off-campus to various schools, interested people etc.

MATs might also avail themselves of the various cultural experiences brought by their fellow students and have cultural studies seminars where certain activities and discussions could be used to introduce a new culture.

MATs could organize a discussion group with ISEs to discuss topics of interest such as: intellectual machismo versus sexual machismo: where do they occur, or something regarding the third world, or youth revolution.

MATs could work with Howard Shapiro or Don Batchelder in providing experiential situations for ISPs.

MATs and ICTs could join together and tackle a problem on campus together: the food, or problems of isolation or the tendency for groups to self-select themselves for seating arrangements for meals. This seminar might be held with the ISEs.

MATs, ICTs, ISEs could organize and bring representatives of the community to campus to explain their organization's purpose and have a discussion afterwards. People from Zero Population Growth, abortion counseling, draft counseling, Brotherhood of the Spirit Commune, or other communes, natural health foods store or farm, Woolman Hill or other alternative schools, day care centers or other groups from around the are might be asked to come.

MATs could volunteer in small groups to attach themselves to Sam's office to help organize activities such as setting up a newspaper, advertising and participating in fall leaf tours, maple syrup, or sugar tours, historical sights tours, concerts etc., or perhaps getting a mini-ski lodge operating where skis, sleds, poles and other implements could be stored, and then plan ski days for the campus.

Some ideas suggested by ISEs who answered questionnaires on how to break the barrier between English-speaking students and English learners.

Sports with MATS, ICTs
Camping with the above
Plays with the above
Small discussion groups with MATS and ICTs
Trips with MATS and ICTs
Set up visitations for high schools, colleges in the area
Big brother, big sister concept for orienting ISE to campus
Sensitivity groups, T-groups or marathon groups at locations such as Camp Arden

(These situations could be used as field exercises and for purposes of information gathering to be later shared with the group: for example a case study of foreign students could be done as a result of a big brother/sister relationship--a study of his or her progress at S.I.T. in language and social relationships as well as his feelings and how they change from time to time. A ground rule could be: do not ask a student a direct question about him or herself for purposes of this study. In this way, the emphasis would be not on what happens to the foreign student (for the purposes of the study) but rather on the MATs becoming increasingly aware of non-verbal cues)

Form a book list about culture or culture-related areas for reference in the library, perhaps writing a few lines on what each book contained, and type it up for the librarian in charge. Attempt to get one or more good representative books on as many cultures and sub-cultures as possible: Indian, Mexican, Chicano, Puerto-Rican, French, Spanish, Chinese, Cuban, Ukranian, African. Try to find the most readable literature.

Study Ivan Illich's work with second language acquisition in Cuernavaca, Mexico. A group of MATs might study his work in Mexico and bring back a report of what he was doing. John Holt might be interested in coming to speak if this were done in a public way--for example, in conjunction with a nearby college or university.

To meet the new challenges of our time many groups and organizations have joined together to tackle the problems using the viewpoints and the approaches they think best. The development of cross-cultural communication and understanding is one of the challenges which many of these organizations (some of which are sub-cultures themselves) are faced with and about which they are attempting to do something. A study of various organizations and groups might yield information which might be valuable in increasing MAT experience in the area of cross-cultural communication:

Alternative and Experimental Schools in Connecticut

Camp Ahissa, Forge Hill Rd., Volunton, Conn. 06384

The Children's School, 47 Earl St., Manchester, Conn. 06040

Early Learning Center, 12 Gary Rd., Stamford, Conn. 06903, Margaret Skutc

El Barrio, P.O. Box H, Williamantic, Conn, 06226

West District School, Unionville, Conn. John McNamara; Elem.

Westledge School, Simsbury, Conn. 06070; Jr. Hi-Hi.

Whitby School, 969 Lake Ave., Greenwich, Conn. 06830: John Blessington, Elem-JrHi

U. Of Conn., Inner Coollege Experiment, Storrs, Conn.

Beckett Academy, River Rd., East Haddam, Conn. 06423

Leeds School, Greenwich, Conn., Mrs. Debeauport at 203-661-4545

Alternative and Experimental Schools in Massachusetts

Adams Junior High School, Abaigail Ave., Quincy, Mass.

Blynman School, Magnolia, Mass.

Boardman School, Roxbury, Mass; elem.

Boston School for Human Resources, Boston, Mass. 02115, Bob Doolittle, 13th year school

Britt School, Box 712, Oak Bluffs, Mass. 02557

Cambridge Free School, Cadbury Rd. Cambridge, Mass. 02140

Central School, 3 Boardman Place, Cambridge, Mass., 02139; Lisa Perhouse

The Common School, Lessey St., Amherst, Mass., 01002, Mrs. Johnson, elem.

Concord Middle School, Concord, Mass.

Community Day School, 245 Porter Lake, Springfield, Mass.; 3-6

Davis Elementary School, Newton, Mass. 02158

The Dugway, Glendale, Mass. 01229

Educational Services, Inc. Brighton, Mass. 02135

Educational Development Center, 55 Chapel St., Newton, Mass.

Entelek, Inc. 42 Pleasant St., Newburgport, Mass. 01950

Fayerwether Street School, P. O. Box 287, Cambridge, Mass. 02138; 4-13

More alternative and Experimental Schools in Massachusetts

Hampshire College, Amherst, Mass. 01002

Haver, 49 Revere St., Boston, Mass.

Highland Park Free School c/o Mary Lamb, Morgan Street, Head Start, Holyoke, Mass.

Horace Mann Elem. School, Newton, Mass. 02158

Law & Education Center, Harvard U., 24 Garden St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138

Lewis Jr. J.S. Roxbury, Mass. 02119

Liberty House, 944 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02139

Linden Hill School, Northfield, Mass.

Meadowbrook Jr. H.S. Newton, Mass.

Francis J. Moraco School, 61 Irving St., Winchester, Mass. 01890

Murray Road School, Newton, Mass.

The Neighborhood Day School, 74 Fernwood Rd., Boston, Mass. 02115

The Neighborhood Schools, 74 Fernwood Rd., Roxbury, Mass.

New School for Children, 27 Dudgey St. Roxbury, Mass. 02119

Palfrey Street School, 119 Palfrey St., Watertown, Mass. 02172; 9-12

Pioneer Valley Montessori Society, 1524 Parker St. Springfield, Mass. 01129, David Bigda

Playroom 81, 81 Prentiss St., Roxbury St, Roxbury, Mass.

Roxbury Community School Box 1765, Leyland St. Dorchester, Mass. 02125; 5-8

Satya Community School, P. O. Box 237, Lincoln, Mass. 01773 Ted Schmidt

Storefront Learning Center, 181 W. Brookline, Boston, Mass. 02118

Study-Travel-Community School, RFD Box 206, Sheffield, Mass.

Sudbury-Lincoln Elm. School Sudbury, Mass.

The Sudbury Valley School, 171 Dutton Rd., Sidbury, Mass.

Trout Fishing In America, 10A Magazine St., Cambridge, Mass.

Tufts Road School, Tufts Rd., Winchester, Mass.

Underwood Elem School, Newton, Mass. 02158

Warehouse Cooperative School, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, Mass. 02172, Knowles Dougherty

More alternative and experimental Schools in Massachusetts

Harvey Wheeler Elem School, Concord, Mass.

Williams Elem School, Newton, Mass. 02158, Mrs. Anne Carr

Worchester New School, 615 Southbridge, Auburn, Mass.

------School, Woolman Hill, Greenfield, Mass.

National Association of Independent Schools, 4 Liberty Square, Boston, Mass. 02109, Mr. Edward Yoemans

Shady Hill School, 178 Coolidge Hill, Cambridge, Mass. 02138

Experimental and Alternative Schools in New York City

Academy for Educational Development, 437 Madison Ave. NYC. 758-5454

Addie May Collins Library, 128th St & Madison Ave, NYC 10035

Bank Street College of Education, 216 W. 14th St, NYC 10011

Bensalem Experimental College, Fordham U. Bronx, N.Y. 10458

Centers for Change Inc. c/o Frank Ress, 125 W. 70th St. NYC

Children's Community Workshop School, 55 W. 88th St., NYC

The Choir School of St. Thomas Church, 123 W. 55th St., NYC, 10019

Committe for A Village Community School 64 Horatio St., NYC, 10014

Cuando School, East First St., NYC.

Discovery Room for Children, 160th St. & Amsterdam Ave., NYC

East Harlem Block School, NYC 10029

East Harlem Day School, 1712 Madison Ave. NYC 10029

East Hill School, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850 (outside New York City)

Emmaus House, 241 E. 116th, N.Y.C 10029

The Fifteenth St. School 206 W. 15th St., N.Y. 10001

Freegarden School, 204 W. 83rd St. ,NYC 10024, Phyllis Tower

L.E.A.P. 44 E. 3rd St., N.Y.C. 10003, Jr. Hi.

Lorillard Children's School, Bronx, N.Y. 10458

Open Children's Community School, 535 E. 11th, NYC.

Quintano's School, 156 W. 56th, N.Y.C

Robin Hood School, 207 W. 22nd St., NYC.

Summerhill Society, 5 Beekman St., NYC

Walden School, 1W. 88th St., NYC.

Learning Corporation of America, 711 5th Ave., NYC

Chelsea Open School, St. Peter's Church 346 W. 20th St. NYC

The Living School, 45 E. 65th St, NYC 10021

Harvey Scribner, Superintendent of Schools of NYC Schools, c/o Board of Education could be contacted for further information.

A study of the Alternative Schools- experimental school movement could be made, by a group of MATs in preparation of a report or for the purpose of a seminar to consider this movement and its application to the cross-cultural communications area.

Teacher Drop-Out Center, Amherst Mass., Box 521 09002 could be contacted and perhaps visited.

Contact David Rump, who will travel in the Eastern U.S. to help people start schools. Perhaps he could come and be a part of the seminar, or give some helpful information. 413-584-3539.

Gerald Friedberg will also travel to help set up schools. Bensalem College, Fordham University, Bronx, N.Y. 10468, 212-298-7614.

The New Schools Exchange, 301 E. Cañon Perdido, Santa Barbara, California 93101 has a book, Rasberry Greenway Exercises that tells how to go about setting up an alternative school.

"New Schools Manual" explains how one group of free school people have worked out the various problems of setting up a school in California. It deals with credentials, diplomas, incorporation, book-keeping, admission to college and taxes. $1 from New Directions Community School, 445 Tenth St., Richmond, California 94801.

Vito Perrone at the University of North Dakota has worked out an interesting teacher education program that prepares people for the Integrated Day approach.

The Educational Development Center, 55 Chapel Street, Newton, Mass., has fine resources and consultants on the Integrated Day approach.

New University Conference, 622 West Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Ill. (Room 403A), 312-929-3070, is a "radical political group" that keeps a list of college openings for their people.

Look into THE BIG ROCK CANDY MOUNTAIN and THE WHOLE EARTH CATALOGUE, Portola Institute, Inc. 1115 Merrill St., Menlo Park, CA. 94025. Lots of information about alternative school approach.

The following schools in Vermont may give some help in investigation, information gathering, on alternative schools.

Beam School, 152 Church St., Burlington, Vt. 05401
Community School, Plainfield Vt., Sam Clark
East Hill Farm, Andover Rd., Chester, Vt. Dick Bliss
Goddard College, Work Term Office, Plainfield, Vt. 05667
New School, Marshfild, Vt.
Prospect School, North Bennington Vt., Rush Welter
Shaker Mountain School, Box 74, Hinesburg, Vt. 05461, Jerry Mintz
Study/Travel/Community School Box 201, Putney, Vt. 05340
Title III Action Center

Title III Action Center, P.O. Box 104, Woodstock, Vt. 05091
Vershire School, RFD # 2, South Royalton, Vermont, 05068

A question of what is being done in the community to enhance communication and understanding between various sub-cultures could be asked to the following groups:

Brotherhood of the Spirit
Front organization - Northfield, Massachusetts
Community - Warwick, Mass.

Senior Center- Mr. David K. Hughes (Brattleboro)

Dartmouth Indian Program- John Olguin

Zero Population Growth- Linda Stavely (Brattleboro)

Environmental League of the Connecticut River Valley- Jerry James (Brattleboro)

Windham Regional Planning Commission- William Schmidt (Brattleboro)

The Unitarian Church- Bill Romeo (West Brattleboro)

Planned Parenthood- 257-0153

Environmental Center- Sharon Bennett (Ripton, Vt.)

This concludes Section III. Before going on to the final section, students might want to give feedback on the value of the activities or questions they chose to work on. They might evaluate whether they have changed as a result of engaging in this section and in whay ways. They might also suggest new ideas or revisions in any area for consideration by the group and the Director and Assistant director of the MAT program.

In Country Study

This section is intended to give an opportunity for the evaluation of skills and progress achieved through the Experiential Learning Seminar. This would be done by actually putting students in situations where they would naturally have to use what they learned, or had not learned. Individual MATs would have an actual opportunity to assess the overall value of the Experiential Learning Seminar since the in-country experience would entail not only

intellectual and emotional experience, but also would require the use of Experiential Learning Skills.

The first step will be preparation for in-country study and will take place in the United States in the form of a drop-off. Students will choose a particular area of interest to study during drop-off for a week in urban area with representatives from many different cultures, such as Springfield, Mass., New York City, New Haven, Conn., Hartford, Conn., Boston or Cambridge, Mass., or the Northern Kingdom. (one idea for study might be the Model Cities' success in establishing a school for drop-outs in Springfield, Mass., and community response to such a program. MATs could go in groups of 3 for this exercise, and upon return to campus could share their experiences with fellow MATs, and later on with ISEs or ICTs.

Following this, foreign language MATs could take a six-week in-country home stay and ESL or TEFL MATs could take an extended homestay and teaching assignment. During this time MATs could study a specific cultural aspect chosen before making the trip. This would not only allow them to acquire additional knowledge about the host country, but would also provide a further opportunity for them to evaluate the value of the Experiential Learning Seminar--which they could report on when they returned to the United States. Thus, there would be a built-in evaluation of the program which would allow for modification and therefore, improvements in the effectiveness of the program.

Research on the specific cultural aspect might entail taking surveys, taking courses at a local university, attending seminars, making special study trips. This aspect would resemble an independent study project in essence, but with the focus on the

preparation of a course or presentation of the material gathered. Students could be other MATs, ISEs, ICTs etc. and the material could be presented through use of audio-visual materials, articles from the country etc.

Following are some ideas that could be used as topics of the presentation:

Research the literature of that culture for children's books and find out what kinds of cultural morays are encouraged by the people in that society. Do a comparative study on one's own society and see what it attempts to inculcate into its children through literature. Instead of literature, try television or records.

Study people from a particular sub-culture with attention to the non-verbal cues that are used. Compare them or contrast them to the ones used by one's own culture. Read books like Body Language, Silent Language, Proxemic Behavior, etc., if they have not already been read, to aid in the research.

Study the beliefs on marriage, divorce, religion, family, courting, child-rearing, treatment of the elderly, male-domination versus female domination in the family, or intellectual machismo versus sexual machismo etc. which exist in a particular sub-culture or culture and compare it to one's own culture. What things can be seen as to areas where it would be difficult for relating to occur, or where it would be relatively simple for relating to occur.

Look into various publications that are popular in 2 or more different countries. (music, Top 40's, old favorites, folk-songs, protest songs or movies, theatre, T.V. advertising, fashions etc.). Make a contrast or comparison of the tastes of a representative group of the same age from each country. Investigate whether either group's tastes have been influenced by the other country's group. Is it possible to tell anything about the country and its culture through a study of this kind? What kinds of folkways, morays etc. can be ascertained? For example, can religious background be determined, or previous historical background, or the country's attitude towards a nearby country be determined if not known? What predictions can be made if any?

The types of employment. Preparation for and initiation into positions of work. Initiative, areas of free choice, supervision. Remuneration and security. Outlook for "advancement" and responsibility and attitude of workers toward remuneration scale and "advancement".

Social distinctions, caste divisions. Occasions for class mixture. Consciousness of class levels or class separations in parents, in children, and time and methods of realization. Language differences of social class levels.

Language formulation and usual stereotyped utterances in various roles of social contacts. The clerks in the stores and customers. The mistress and her maid. The casual meeting on the street, informal teas, formal receptions. To host and hostess.

Motions and gestures in various social situations, with greetings and leavetakings. Shaking hands--how frequently; who extends hand first? Introductions. Differences of ceremoniousness in different social groups.

Drinking songs, "popular" songs, "folk" songs. Community singing. Customs in theatres--ushers, tips, programs, signals of beginning of performance, intermissions. Conduct of audience. Social position of actors, musicians, athletes.

Religious practices. Holidays and festivals and how celebrated.

Profanity and expletives. Tones and gestures accompanying various ejaculations. Occasions of use and attitudes of various groups.

The clothing appropriate for various occasions. Kind of hats for men and woman, and when worn? Differences of rural and urban districts. Style of support for men's trousers and removal of coats in public.

The meals--when, how many, what? Seating at meals. Practices with and without servants. Signals.

The practices accompanying eating. Spoken formulas. Methods of using eating utensils. ("American forks" are quite noticeable in Europe.) Water with meals. Tea, coffee, wine, beer, cocktails, liqueurs. Attitudes toward various beverages. "Soft drinks".

Types of buildings and uses of various parts. Typical furnishings for each. Materials of building. Modes of heating. Plumbing and mechanical "conveniences." Bathing and conventions of "cleanliness"--tubs, showers, "running water," privacy.

Funerals and disposal of the dead. Conventions of mourning.

Tabus, especially verbal. Limitations of certain utterances. Areas of "silence".

Differing practices in various seasons of the year--those dependent on climate and physical features of country and those that are "conventional." (Desirability, therefore, of living or visiting various parts of the country.)

After students had returned from their in-country stay and had presented their findings to the group for consideration and discussion, the group could evaluate the value of the Experiential Learning Seminar in personal terms together. They could tell whether they had been helped or not by the Experiential Learning Seminar as a result of what they did overseas. Following are some questions students might ask themselves and each other.

1. Have you applied Experiential Learning Skills to the best of your ability?
2. Have they helped you in life? If so, how? If not, How?
3. What do you now know with certainty that you wish others knew about cross-cultural communication, if anything?
4. Is there something you feel you should know that you do not know now?
5. How would you transmit to others what you would like to have them know?
6. Can the Experiential Learning Seminar be improved? How, please be specific?
7. Would you recommend continuing the Experiential Learning Seminar next year?
8. Given a situation where you had to train people in cross-cultural communication, would you use the Experiential Learning Approach? Why or why not? If no, what approach would you use?

Thus, students and staff would know clearly whether the Experiential Learning Seminar had been beneficial or not.

Footnotes

a. De Ropp, The Master Game,(NYC,N.Y.:Dell Publishing Co.,1968) p.22

1. Peace Corps, Learning How to Learn,(obtained from Charles MacCormick) p. 12

2. " " " " " " " " " p. 12

Appendix A

Learning how to learn

(Handout to Trainees)

LEARNING HOW TO LEARN

One of the primary objectives of the experiential laboratory is to help the trainees learn how to learn during training in a way that will be of use to them for continued learning as Volunteers in the host country. What we mean by learning how to learn and the process that will hopefully be learned might be clarified by examining the learning process in the laboratory.

When we talk about learning how to learn in the experiential laboratory, we are not talking about the kind of learning that predominates in school situations (memorizing facts or formulas or the opinions of authorities for regurgitation), nor are we talking about the kind of learning that builds on and reinforces our particular prejudices or views of the world. Instead, we are talking about (1) an experimental approach to learning in which the concepts we learn, or constructs we develop, are treated as hypotheses (not facts), are subjected to constant testing, and are modified as we learn more about their relation to the real world; (2) trainee-centered rather than trainer-centered learning, with the trainee assuming the major responsibility for his own learning, but making maximum use of the resources available; (3) learning from examination and assessment of experience; (4) an "openness to experience," a willingness to enlarge upon one's own experience or to learn from the experiences of others; (5) "resistance to premature closure," the ability to withhold judgment until all data have been carefully analyzed; (6) an attitude of "constructive discontent," the tendency to question but to accept and to use until something better is found (as opposed to the tendency to reject and destroy); and (7) learning through the identification and solution of problems, a creative approach to problem solving with emphasis on the exploration and examination of alternatives.

Learning how to learn is not easy to achieve, however. We expect to encounter considerable resistance to an approach that deviates to such an extent from the traditional approaches. But in keeping with the experiential model, we can learn a great deal about resistance to change and new ideas from our own reactions to something different. The Volunteer who recognizes these tendencies in himself will have much more empathy with and tolerance of his hosts when they are resisting his ideas.

A frustrating aspect of working with people is that most of us to some extent resist anything new--new approaches, methods, techniques; facts that contradict what we already know or want to believe; opinions from persons who are not perceived as experts or authorities; sometimes anything from an authority figure, or member of the establishment, another culture, another race, etc. But it may well be that the more a person resists learning something new, the more it becomes a part of him once he accepts it. Others who are in a position to observe this resistance and the various forms it takes--ridicule, cynicism, sarcasm, hostility, aggression, withdrawal, rejection, etc.--cannot help but learn something about human nature (and something about themselves), about the process of change and resistance to change. You can probably see all of this among the trainees, and most certainly will see it in your work as a Volunteer, on the part of the host national who resists what the Volunteers have to offer, and on the part of the Volunteers who resist what the host culture has to offer.

One of the problems is that we are often unaware of the extent to which we are resistant to something new or different, and we resist and resent the suggestion that we might be. It may well be that the more resistant we are, the more we try to convince others and ourselves that we are not, and the more we try to justify our resistance by showing how obviously stupid, inferior, inadequate, antiquated, unrealistic, naive, etc., whatever we are resisting is (and, of course, the person or persons associated with it).

Too often, what happens is that those who are resisting engage in destructive criticism, and offer nothing to replace what they refuse to accept. Others make suggestions or demands, but often with little attempt to understand what it is they wish to change or replace or the effect this might have on the total program (or the school, the office, community, other persons, etc.). Too often, those who are attempting to introduce something new then lose patience or become angry or resentful.

If one of our objectives is to learn how to learn from our experience in training and beyond training, we must become more aware of and sensitive to our own reactions and the reactions of others. Many of these reactions will not be verbal, which means that we need to learn to read nonverbal cues more accurately. This is difficult enough in our own culture, but becomes particularly important when the cues we must rely on are part of another culture.

Contrary to popular opinion, experience is not a very good teacher, unless we know how to learn from experience. Few of us do. It may help us understand why if we keep in mind some very basic principles of perception, which apply to each of us:

1. We are highly selective in what we attend to from among the multitude of stimuli available. We see what we are looking for or what we expect to see and are oblivious of or ignore those cues or stimuli that do not fit our particular frame of reference. We create a world of concepts and constructs that make sense to us and select cues that will support and reinforce our own particular world view.

2. We distort. If something does not quite fit the world as we know it, we change it so it will (but we do this unconsciously--we are not aware of our distortions, although they might be quite apparent to those around us).

3. We create. If we need something to maintain our particular world of expectation, we may see or hear things that do not actually exist (but they are very real to us); i.e., if we expect someone to be hostile, we pick up hostile cues, whether they exist or not. Our expectations are met and we are able to maintain a consistent, and in a sense secure, world of experience, a world which may have little relation to any reality other than the one we create. The insidious and disturbing fact is that people very often do begin to behave as we expect them to, and the world we expect becomes in fact the real world. Thus, if we expect a person to lie or cheat, to dislike us, to be suspicious of us, to oppose us, etc., we cannot help but communicate this expectation to him, and the chances are our expectations will be met. The reverse is also true. If we expect people to like us, to trust us, etc., these expectations also are quite likely to be met.

Thus two people with different world views will select, distort, and create to maintain these different views and, therefore, may perceive the same situation in entirely different ways, each person totally incapable of comprehending how the other could be so blind or stupid. The stronger our convictions or beliefs, the more emotionally involved, the greater this tendency to select, distort, and create to support these convictions or beliefs. We see these phenomena among people with similar cultural backgrounds and thus it is easy to understand how misunderstandings can develop between people from totally different backgrounds.

To help the participants learn how to learn from their own experience, laboratory training is based in part on the Dilemma-Invention-Feedback-Examination learning model. We try to develop dilemmas or place you in situations where you develop dilemmas yourselves and to structure the training so that you can examine your feelings, reactions, and typical ways of resolving dilemmas or solving problems. We try to help you create a "responsive environment," a climate in which you can experiment with alternatives and in which you can learn to give and receive feedback. And last, we try to help you learn to generalize beyond the laboratory experience so that what you learn here will have application in all aspects of your work and life, with particular emphasis on your Peace Corps service.

Not only should you learn more about yourself, about your beliefs, values, assumptions, attitudes, behaviors, goals, and expectations, but you should learn something about the consequences of all these in terms of your relations with others. You should become aware of and sensitive to sources of feedback that will give you the information you need as a guide for future behavior. You should become more aware of your own reactions to others and consequences in terms of your own attitudes, behavior, and working relations with others. You should develop more understanding and tolerance of views that might be different from your own, and you should have a better understanding of the ways in which those with whom you are working strive to maintain their particular world view or find their way out of the dilemmas they face.

The Dilemma-Invention-Feedback-Examination Learning Model

1. Dilemma. A dilemma is any situation where we are not sure what to do. It is a new situation; thus, old solutions and previous ways of behaving may not be appropriate. When our perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs, expectations, and actions do not achieve the desired result or are in any way questioned or challenged, we face a dilemma. We try to find our way out of dilemmas in many ways:

a. We may behave as though the new situation were like the old one and use an old solution that really is not appropriate.

b. We may seek advice, look for an "expert" to tell us what to do.

c. We may do nothing, hoping the problem will go away.

d. We may become "defensive," and try to deny that a problem exists.

e. We may become hostile and attack the person we perceive as creating the dilemma.

f. We may withdraw, go into "flight," trying to run away from the problem.

g. Or, we may begin to search or explore in an attempt to discover new approaches to solution of the dilemma, which leads us to:

2. Invention. Invention is encouraged when we become aware that conventional or traditional solutions and procedures are no longer adequate to deal with a situation. Invention occurs when a person is ready to think, to shed old notions, to experiment and explore to see whether new ones can be found that will work. The period when old behavior is being abandoned and new behavior has not yet been invented or accepted to replace it is referred to as an "unfrozen" period. It is surrounded by uncertainty, confusion, and anxiety. It is a period when there is likely to be criticism, accusation, attack, withdrawal, flight, and defensiveness. This is why the free and supportive atmosphere of the laboratory (an atmosphere that expects and tolerates these reactions) is so important and why it is important to create this atmosphere if one wants to initiate change outside the laboratory.

3. Feedback. Feedback is the key to the "responsive environment." It is the way in which people let another person know their feelings, observations, perceptions, and reactions, in respect to his attitudes and behavior. We can seek feedback, verbal and nonverbal, to examine the consequences of our behavior and to learn to be aware of and to perceive more accurately the nonverbal cues we need to continually assess the effectiveness of our behavior. We will have to rely primarily on nonverbal feedback when we enter another culture, but in training we need to learn to make effective use of verbal feedback.

4. Examination. The last step in the process is that of examining the total experience--the situation, the dilemma, and the results of experimentation and feedback--to see whether anything has been learned that could be applied in other situations. Using the experiential model as a guide, we reflect on the total experience--the dilemma,

the action we took, and the feedback we received. Was our action or response to the situation, an old response of fight, flight, or withdrawal, or did we attempt to invent response more appropriate to the situation and our desired outcomes? How effective was the action? What feedback did we receive regarding its effectiveness?

Moving on around the experiential model, what does all this mean in terms of our past experience or theories and expectations regarding human behavior? How does this experience fit with past experience? Does this experience require any modification of our existing views or theories? Have we learned anything that would allow us to elaborate on previous understandings? Can we generalize to other similar situations--in the training program, as a Volunteer, or in other aspects of life? What questions or hypotheses has this examination generated? Should we try in the future to find answers to our remaining questions or to test our hypotheses? What opportunities might be available to us, or what resources do we have?

Learning to approach our dilemmas, particularly dilemmas in our interactions with others, in this way is some of the most valuable learning we can acquire. But unless the new learning can be applied in situations outside the laboratory, it will not be very effective or long lasting. Attention must be given to helping one another generalize, to recognize and plan for applications in other situations, particularly as Volunteers in another culture.

Hopefully, this process will continue beyond the laboratory. The Volunteer will face many dilemmas when he enters another culture. He will encounter different values, beliefs, attitudes, expectations, behaviors, etc., that may well be in conflict with his own. What worked for him in his own culture might not be appropriate or effective in the new culture. He will encounter stereotyped reactions to him as an American or a Peace Corps Volunteer, which he may need to correct or to accomodate.

Many of the familiar cues will be gone, the Volunteer might be misreading many cues, and he might be unaware of other cues that would reveal the reactions of those around him. He needs to be particularly sensitive to the cues available, and to the assumptions he is making. He needs to test these assumptions whenever possible. He needs to be aware of the cues he is presenting and the reactions of others. He needs to be ready to currect misperceptions as they occur, in a way that can be accepted by the other person (knowing full well that we trust our own perceptions before the verbal claims or denials of others). If he is able to do all this, he will have learned how to learn.

Experiential learning is thus emotional as well as intellectual, and involves behavior analysis and skill practice. It involves the trainee actively (working alone and with others) in:

- o experiencing situations similar or analogous to those he might encounter as a Volunteer;
- o identifying and analyzing carefully chosen problems, particularly those of critical interest, conflict, or difference between the two cultures;
- o exploring alternative solutions to these problems and the probable consequences;
- o examining his own feelings and reactions in the various problems and situations presented;
- o examining his own values, beliefs, attitudes, assumptions and expectations and the problems these might create in another culture;
- o attempting to integrate and conceptualize the learning that results from these experiences and analyses;
- o generalizing from the training experience to the anticipated living and working situation in the host country;
- o identifying the kinds of information he needs to solve new problems, or skills he needs to be effective;
- o identifying and learning to make use of available resources to meet these informational needs, particularly for continued learning on his own following training;
- o developing or taking advantage of opportunities for skill practice.

Experiential training is designed to shift the focus of attention from the trainer to the trainee, to learning rather than training, creative-thinking and problem-solving rather than memorization, and responsibility for initiative and exploration rather than conformity.

A brief comparison of some aspects of the experiential and traditional approaches might help to clarify some of the differences between the two:

Appendix B

Read Your Neighbor

Jim Bostain

(received from Mr. Bostain during a lecture at the School for International Training)

Read Your Neighbor

The world is 95 per cent un-American, and is likely to remain so, at least, as long as we're alive.

We cannot ignore the un-Americans any more (as we used to).

We cannot hope to straighten them out (they're so busy trying to straighten us out).

We cannot hope to wipe them out (there are so many of them, for one thing.)

The only possibility is to get out there and co-exist: to learn to operate efficiently with them without either trying to convert them to Americans or going native ourselves.

To operate efficiently with any one, it is necessary to learn to read his behavior. All behavior has signalling value; a signal becomes a communication when it is perceived.

You move your elbow; the other man sees it: that's communication. Let us suppose in addition that he decides that the movement of your elbow was significant. The trouble is, he assigns to your behavior the significance it has in <u>his</u> system

If he's one of us, he'll probably assign to the movement the same significance you intended. But if he comes from the other side of town, or the other side of the world, he may read into your behavior a significance very different from what you intended.

So it can happen that you send a clear and unambiguous signal, that he receives it clearly and unambiguously, and that total understanding results. Example: an American writes GIFT ('present') on a food package, and a German reads GIFT ('poison').

95 per cent of the world uses un-American signals. They read us as if we were signalling in their systems, we read them as though they were signalling in ours. This behavioral sub-literacy becomes progressively more dangerous and expensive as the world grows smaller. It's nice if you can love your neighbor; but learning to read him may do more good in the long run.

Few of us can afford to take a course in 'How to Read a Man', even if such courses were available. Still, a mere awareness of two points can do wonders: (1) everybody is sending out signals all the time; (2) the other man may be operating in a different system.

by Jim Bostain

Appendix C

Canadian Training Methods

canadian training methods

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1970

A participative approach to inservice training and evaluation

by DES CONNOR and STAN SEARLE

SEVERAL articles in recent issues of *Canadian Training Methods* appear to highlight a management or expert-oriented training design and a quite structured method of evaluation. Traditional and rather authoritarian styles of training and evaluation seem out of step with the increasingly participative dimension in business and public management, with the growing emphasis placed on the individual person and with much current theory and practice in motivation and leadership.

What is the role of a marketing approach to inservice training? How much weight should be given to the trainees' learning goals versus management's perceptions of the trainees' learning needs? If we expect trainees to act in a participative, involving manner with their clients and colleagues, are we consistent when our training courses provide a model of directive, top-down management?

How do you evaluate a participative learning experience? Are there useful alternatives to highly structured questionnaires? How may evaluation be used to reinforce learning achieved on the course and foster an ethos of continuous learning? These are some of the questions which have occured to us in an experimental training programme over the last two years as we worked with a variety of clients.

Unless training and evaluative styles are consistent with the administrative and operational styles desired and practised by their organization, trainees are given two contradicting messages. They are most likely to treat as unrealistic the counsels of perfection urged on them by superiors and to internalize the one they experience and see demonstrated.

Participative design

Typically, groups of managers or operational staff are brought together to be exposed to a pre-determined schedule of training sessions about which they had little to say. Their personal learning goals are only partially formulated and are often downgraded and ignored by trainers.

We have found that more worthwhile learning outcomes are produced if we spend most of the first evening providing participants with an opportunity to (a) identify and list anonymously their personal goals for the training event, i.e. things they want to learn, experience and do by its conclusion; (b) share these goals in a protected manner and (c) place priorities upon them. These priorities then guide the training staff in formulating specific training sessions during the days which follow.

This is a "high risk — high gain" design! It asks senior managers, participants and trainers to each risk more than they are accustomed to do, yet the results have consistently demonstrated that the risks were well worth taking.

Senior managers (those responsible for the course and the job performance of the participants), often wonder if the "right" questions will come up and will receive a high enough priority to ensure treatment in formal work periods. (There are some interesting assumptions under this fear, e.g. that the participants lack an appreciation of the "right" questions).

Participants often find it hard to believe that the event really will be guided by their own goals and priorities and that the screens built into the process will protect individuals from recognition by both management and peers.

Trainers must come prepared to deal competently with a wide range of subject matter through a variety of training methods, to have further resources available at short notice and to admit ignorance when necessary.

Example

Recently a one-week workshop for 20 people began on a Sunday evening with a brief welcome, a short introductory exercise and a general overview of the broad areas which *might* be covered during the next five days (These were essentially the areas that the organization's management had worked out in a prior planning meeting with the trainers). However, emphasis was placed on the fact that some people could well have other subjects which they needed to deal with before they could work on the broad area outlined.

Participants were then invited to list on a sheet of paper their personal goals for the workshop. ("The things you would like to do, learn, experience etc. between now and Friday noon. The things which, if accomplished, will make you say then 'This has been a good week'"). Each was asked to place a personally identifiable code number on his paper, e.g. wife's birthday, a phone number, etc.

When completed, sheets were placed on a centrally located table,

were shuffled and randomly distributed to each participant who then became the advocate for someone else's ideas in the creation of a single comprehensive list of personal goals. This was printed on flipchart sheets for all to see and totalled 45 items.

Participants were told to edit the items on the sheet they held, but not to censor those they didn't agree with. Trainers intervened when censoring was noticed; a positive group climate and a high level of interest prevailed. When the comprehensive list was complete, the individual papers of personal goals were gathered up for later use in evaluating the workshop.

After a coffee break, each participant reviewed all of the personal goals on the comprehensive list and listed on a slip of paper "the numbers of up to 20 which you feel are important for *you.*" Again, the lists were gathered, shuffled and re-distributed randomly before a rapid "show of hands" process assigned a score to each of the 45 items. Scores ranged from zero to 15. High ranking and low ranking items were underlined and comments elicited from the participants about them.

Trainers indicated that they would allocate working periods to the high priority items, that a more specific schedule would evolve as we discovered what external resources were required and available, and that people interested in low priority items might well find them covered as part of another item but that, if not, they should use un-scheduled time to work on these personal goals.

This method frequently leads to valuable insights about the participants and their organization by all concerned, including administrators. A high level of commitment to individual and group goals is generated.

From the viewpoint of defensive participants, the system is beyond suspicion – there is no way that an administrator or trainer can secretly influence the personal goals or the priorities placed upon them.

An advisory management committee of participants is often elected and used by the trainers to revise the priorities, since new themes of general concern can develop by Wednesday or Thursday. A demonstration and experience of dynamic management is thus provided.

The initially established personal goals are a major resource for evaluating this type of workshop. The lists of personal goals formulated at the outset are brought forth in the closing session, the code numbers called out and the sheets returned to their creators.

Participative evaluation

Each is then invited to assess and mark each goal as having been fully achieved, partly, or not at all. Then he is asked, for goals fully or partly attained, to indicate by a symbol the principal learning sources e.g. other participants, resource persons, administrators, personal reflection, reading, trainers, etc.

The papers are collected and the results tabulated by a staff member during the remainder of the evaluation for feedback just prior to the conclusion of the event. (Typically, 70-90% of the goals are accomplished fully or partly, mainly through other participants).

In the second phase of the evaluation, participants are invited to anonymously:

1. Identify and list insights, learnings and experiences which they have acquired this week and which they plan to transfer to their work.
2. Rate their satisfaction with (a) the subject matter covered and (b) the methods used, using a 0-10 scale. In each case they are asked to note factors which helped and hindered the effectiveness of the workshop.
3. Make suggestions for a future workshop e.g. timing, location, topics etc.
4. Add any further comments and suggestions.

Sometimes a third phase is added in which individuals are given an opportunity to identify one or more areas in which they plan to develop, personally and/or professionally, during the next six months. They may then identify and list factors which they think will help and hinder them in this endeavour and note what actions they plan to boost the positive factors and minimize the negative ones. i.e. a force field analysis.

At the conclusion, participants may (a) retain the sheet for future reference, (b) turn it in unsigned for the general guidance of the organization's training director, or (c) place their names on the sheet so the training director may funnel appropriate written materials, conference opportunities etc. in their direction. (This process has obvious connections with Drucker's original concept of "management by objectives and self-control").

The results of the second phase of evaluation are usually collated by subject matter, reproduced and distributed to the participants about three weeks following the event. Little attempt is made to categorize the responses into logical boxes since the impact of the raw returns is felt to have a much more valuable reinforcing effect on all concerned.

Knowing that others plan to transfer certain learnings and skills to their work situation helps to overcome the "organizational inertia" faced by every participant returning to his regular job. When a series of such workshops was carried out with staff from three levels of an organization, the reinforcing and legitimating effects were quite dramatic.

Conclusion

In designing and evaluating inservice training, we need to take effective account not only of management's perspective but of the learning objectives and evaluative judgements of the participants.

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Appendix D

Strength Training

STRENGTH TRAINING: DECREASING THE THREAT OF EMOTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

By Gerald A. Loney

Strength training is a process which has two goals: to help people discover and develop ego strength and the ability to accomplish a task, and to assist them in becoming sensitive to the feelings which they arouse in others while they are working on these tasks. For teachers, this means that strength training gives them experience in setting classroom goals, instituting procedures (including classroom control) which are likely to be helpful in teaching these goals, becoming aware of their behavior, becoming aware of whether their students perceive them as being strong or weak, and using their strengths to overcome their weaknesses.

It is our belief that teachers too often have ignored the emotional aspect of learning. They have focused on the work to be done and have overlooked the effect the emotional climate of the class has on the ability of the class to get the job done. The results of this omission have been disastrous, and frequently have contributed to students' feelings of alienation, unimportance, and hostility. Too many students feel that teachers don't care about them and what they are feeling, but are concerned only that they do their assignments, score well on tests and create no disturbance in class.

It should be emphasized that strength training doesn't seek to eliminate homework, tests or behavior control. Rather it seeks to humanize the atmosphere in which they occur by helping teachers see that the affective and cognitive aspects of

learning are inextricably bound together, and may either be mutually destructive or supportive: when we feel negative emotions, it's difficult to work well, and when we feel positive emotions, our motivation is high.

Strength training was conceptualized by Gerald Weinstein at Teachers College at Columbia University. He saw that too many student and first-year teachers were unable to effectively deal with the stress they encountered while teaching in inner-city schools. When teachers were observed with the goal of diagnosing their strength and sensitivity, they were placed in one of the four following categories:

> 1. Strong-sensitive: This person can maintain a consistent orderly structure in which learners can operate and, at the same time, indicate that he is constantly aware of what is going on with the pupils. The pupils are treated as important and respected persons with feelings, attitudes, and experiences that are worthy of attention.
>
> 2. Strong-insensitive: The person can keep a class in order and maintain his authority, but he never can really see, hear, or experience the pupils. It is pretty much a case of him against the pupils, and the stronger will win.
>
> 3. Weak-sensitive: This person holds the interests and needs of the child foremost in his mind, but is unable to establish the degree of order which would allow him to capitalize on his sensitivity.
>
> 4. Weak-insensitive: This category obviously speaks for itself.
>
> Ideally, the strong-sensitives would appear to be the most desirable trainees, but they are in the distinct minority. In one group considered, 5 out of 73 were given that rating. The largest number of people fell in the categories of strong-insensitives and weak-sensitives.[1] Strength training was developed to assist teachers in becoming strong-sensitives.

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1 Mario Fantini and Gerald Weinstein, in the chapter, "The Teacher: Strength with Sensitivity, in The Disadvantaged: Challenge to Education. New York: Harper and Row, 1968.

The process used in strength training is role-playing, feedback and experimentation with new behaviors. A typical strength training session for a group of teachers begins with one of the teachers teaching a lesson to the others, who role play students of the grade level the teacher expects to teach. Role players are instructed to behave as the teacher makes them feel like behaving.

After about fifteen minutes of teaching, the lesson is stopped, and the teacher asks his colleagues for feedback of three kinds: ratings, feelings and behaviors. Ratings are one-word descriptions of the teacher, feelings are the words that describe how the teacher made the students feel during the lesson, and behaviors are those things the teacher said or did which aroused the feelings and contributed to the ratings. To get the feedback, the trainers ask the group to complete this sentence, "Mr. Martin is _____. He makes me feel _____, when he _____." When this information has been obtained, the trainers, teacher, and group members examine the data for trends and themes. They determine what things the teacher did consistently that had positive or negative effects on the class. Then they suggest things the teacher might do to help him use his strengths to eliminate or minimize the negative effects. The suggestions are in the form of specific behaviors which can be practiced by the teacher, either in or out of class. After a reteach, during which the teacher tries on these new behaviors, the group again gives feedback about the teacher's effectiveness. Ideally, the teaching sessions are all video-taped, and the tapes are used to give visual demonstrations of the verbal feedback.

An example may make this process more understandable. The feedback after Mr. Martin's lesson includes two things frequently mentioned by the group. Many class members rate him as friendly, kind, or helpful. He makes them feel calm, friendly and cooperative when he smiles at them, doesn't shout, looks them in the eye. Others, however, see Mr. Martin as weak and afraid. They feel antagonistic and resentful when he doesn't make Jose and Linda stop talking, and when he tells Charles to keep his feet off the desk, but doesn't say anything when Charles does it a second time.

After the feedback, Mr. Martin says he always has trouble being forceful with his classes. Because he wants to be liked and he wants his students to feel good, he doesn't like to come on as a hard guy. The training group points out that for some, his easy-going manner is having just the opposite effect of that he hopes for: they tune him out or become angry because they think he's weak. As the group discusses this, it becomes clear that Mr. Martin identifies the placing of any restrictions on his students as riding roughshod over them, and believes that people who do this are resented. Furthermore, he argues, it would be unnatural, if not impossible, for him to act tough, and his students would see him as a phoney.

The trainer suggests that he experiment with his belief that people who place restrictions on others are resented. He suggests that Mr. Martin, during the following week, practice giving "qualified yes's." That is, when people ask something of him, he is to state some kind of restriction. If his student secretary asks to use her work period to study for a test, he might give permission, but ask her to

proofread some typing overnight; if his son wants to use the car, he might ask him to get it greased before he goes anyplace. The trainer asks Mr. Martin to try to be conscious of how he feels as he states the restrictions, and to try to notice what reaction people have as they receive them. In addition, he is told that, for the next strength training meeting, he will do a brief reteach focusing on placing restrictions without seeming harsh or unfair.

At the beginning of the next training session, the trainers ask Mr. Martin about his homework. He reports that he gave qualified yes's about ten times. He says that the first time was difficult for him, but that it became easier and easier. The most surprising thing about the homework was that the people to whom he gave restrictions seemed to have no reaction at all! It was almost as though they expected the restrictions.

Then Mr. Martin teaches a short lesson. It's very similar to the previous week's. When LaFrancis throws an eraser at someone, Mr. Martin asks her softly not to do it again. But this time, when the eraser flies a second time, he interrupts the discussion, walks to her desk, looks at her for a second and says that he doesn't want her to do it again. She doesn't. During the feedback, someone asks, LaFrancis why she stopped. "Because I thought he really meant it. The first time was just for fun. The second time was to test him out. He passed the test."

There are a couple of things that should be emphasized about this process. First, it assumes that the teacher has a set of attitudes and accompanying behaviors that can not easily be changed. Therefore he is asked to try on only a small, specific behavior which seems in keeping with his personality. Second, the process

focuses on the feelings of Mr. Martin as well as those of his students. He is asked to try something and to notice how he feels. If the behavior causes too much discomfort, the group can suggest less threatening behaviors to try on. Third, the process provides a relatively safe lab in which to practice behavior change. Like microteaching, the costs of experimentation to both teacher and student are minimized by using role-playing. Fourth, strength training encourages teachers to be sensitive to affect in the classroom. Teachers are encouraged to view classroom behavior as being symptomatic of the classrooms' emotional climate. Teachers are encouraged to acknowledge the legitimacy of emotion in school and to consider its effect on the students ability to work.

Strength training encourages teachers to look at themselves and their students in a more holistic manner. It is a flexible and adaptable process which can be tailored to fit specific needs of specific schools, or used without specific focus for improving both in-service and student teachers. It has been used to ease the process of integration in the south as well as prepare new teachers for difficult assignments in Manhattan. There is a good reason to expect that the strength training program at the University of Massachusetts and similar programs elsewhere will contribute toward making students feel less alienated, angry and unimportant, and will help teachers feel less threatened by emotions in the classroom.

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GOALS

A. Increased understanding of one's own culture

1. One's role within his own culture
2. Applications to classroom
   a. possibility of future students developing same awareness
   b. how society traditionally has defined the role of teacher in this and other countries
3. Consequences of one's role in society in one's relationships with other people

B. Increased sensitivity to other people and other cultures

1. Reactions to others and the consequences
2. Acceptance and/or respect for other people and cultures
3. Awareness of other's needs, moods, perhaps cultural set, through reading of non-verbal cues.
4. Applications of 1, 2, and 3 to classroom
5. Gain confidence in dealing with people of other cultural backgrounds

C. Learning how to learn

1. In unfamiliar or uncomfortable situations. In any dilemma or circumstances in which one is not sure what to do.
2. Model for continuing to learn from one's experiences after leaving classroom.

D. Specific Cultural Information

Appendix E

Three different ways of wording goals
of the Experiential Learning Seminar

General Goals for Symposium on Experiential Learning
which might be included in the program

1. A student who not only understands his own culture and his functioning in it but is also able to transmit this in the classroom so that the students may begin to develop some awareness about themselves and their culture.

   The student will, in the course of work, become observant and alert to human behavior as a guide to his own responses and a subject for analysis and generalization, begin to view him or herself as a cultural being, as a person who acts and reacts according to a fairly well-defined and generally predictable patterns which he or she has learned as a part of his or her culture, operating through him or herself and his or her countrymen and women, for what it is, and see this as simply an example of the phenomenon of culture. (This might mean that during the year, the student would look into some of the representative subcultures in existence in an attempt to discover what values are operating and define them in terms of individual systems working within a framework of problems shared by all sub-cultures within the country).

2. A student, who through experience, develops his awareness of the processes involved in meeting inter-cultural situations and gains confidence in dealing with persons of cultural backgrounds other than his or her own and/or host country; who thus becomes a student who views host country and other countries' cultures with respect and as another example of the cultural phenomenon, subject to his or her personal exploration, analysis and understanding. The student will find means of not only transmitting his or her own attitudes in the classroom, but also provide an atmosphere in which students can develop a respect for persons of cultures or sub-cultures different from their own.

These 2 points combine to draw a picture of what a student can do. A general principle for achieving these goals is that the student be moved toward them from a point of his or her own experience rather than someone else's. These experiences must be real experiences with relevance to his or her life and his or her future and to the society around him or her.

Goals

1. To be able to teach any subject in an American classroom with full awareness of the implicit cultural messages being transmitted.

   a. to be able to recognize the mechanisms (symbols, structures, etc.) which are part of all schooling processes designed to transmit cultural norms.
   b. to be more fully aware of how given subject matter might be taught differently in another culture.

2. To be capable of analyzing the cultural assumptions underlying both sides of a situation where values or attitudes are in conflict.

   a. to identify what values or attitudes are involved.
   b. to describe what cultural norms these attitudes or values are derived from.
   c. to specify the importance given to these values or attitudes in the respective cultural groups represented in the conflict.

3. To articulate one's own system of values, attitudes, and beliefs as well as an ability to analyze one's own behavior in light of these values, attitudes, and beliefs.

4. To be able to analyze and understand foreign behavior as well as the ability to recognize when one is projecting his own values onto others or when one simply does not understand someone else's behavior.

   a. to have knowledge about a specific country and its culture or sub-cultures.

5. To be able to understand the important connection between culture, education, and teaching.

6. To be able to communicate what has been learned to someone else.

   a. to know the cultural sets and expectations of the audience to whom you are communicating as well as selecting an appropriate communication technique.

7. To exhibit knowledge of the indicators which provide insight into a culture

8. To be able to set one's own objectives and to evaluate oneself and progress in the context of those objectives.